MASTER OF MUSIC: CHORAL CONDUCTING

Program Overview

The graduate conducting program trains conductors to be creative, thoughtful, and technically proficient musicians. Students are admitted by audition. Opportunities for choral performance on a professional level are unparalleled.

Curriculum Overview

Graduate conductors take a core curriculum of research, literature, conducting, pedagogy, and ensemble. One year of choral literature is followed by elective courses in performance practice, seminars in choral literature, analysis, vocal pedagogy and related topics. The conducting sequence includes two semesters of choral conducting courses followed by two semesters of applied study. Students conduct a series of four to five recitals culminating in a major recital project with one of Westminster Choir College's core ensembles.

Ensemble singing is a key element of the curriculum. Students sing in a range of large and small ensembles. Learning repertoire through performance is a key tenet of Westminster Choir College. Please see the graduate programs webpage (https://www.rider.edu/academics/colleges-schools/westminster-college-arts/wcc/graduate/) for additional information.

Degree Offered

- Master of Music: Choral Conducting

Contact

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Program Website: Choral Conducting (https://www.rider.edu/academics/colleges-schools/college-arts-sciences/westminster-choir-college/graduate/mm-choral-conducting/)

Related Programs

- Sacred Music (https://www.rider.edu/academics/colleges-schools/college-arts-sciences/westminster-choir-college/graduate/mm-sacred-music/)

Primary Faculty

Tyrone Clinton • Adjunct Assistant Professor, Conducting, 2024, B.A. Morehouse College, D.M.A. Northwestern University.

Secondary Faculty

Vinroy Brown • Adjunct Instructor, Sacred Music, 2017. B.M. Westminster Choir College of Rider University, M.A. Regent University.
Steven Pilkington • Associate Professor, Sacred Music, 1992. B.A. St. Olaf College, M.M. University of Illinois, Ph.D. Drew University.
Tom T. Shelton, Jr. • Professor, Music Education and Sacred Music, 2012. B.M., M.M. University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Master of Music: Choral Conducting Program Requirements

(38 credits)

Learn more about General Graduate Policies (http://catalog.rider.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/mm-mme-mvp-general-policies/).

Code	Title	Credits
Major Area		
CR 517	Master Singers (4 terms)	4
CR 607	Conducting Performance	1
CR 620	Graduate Choral Conducting Seminar ((4 semesters))	8
CR 627 & CR 628	Choral Literature I and Choral Literature II	6
CR 710	Seminar in Choral Literature	3
VC 723	Voice Ped I: Voice Science	3
Core Courses		
MH 731	Intro to Musicology	3
CR 509	Symphonic Choir (4 terms)	4
Theory (TH) or Music History (MH) elective (1 course)		**3**
Core Elective		**3**
One 3-credit graduate WCC course without a CR prefix		
CR 002R	Student Recital	0
Total Credits		**38**

Academic Plan of Study

The following educational plan is provided as a sample only. Students may follow a different plan to ensure a timely graduation. Each student, with guidance from their academic advisor, will develop a personalized educational plan.

Plan of Study Grid

Course	Title	Credits
Year 1		
Fall Semester		
CR 509	Symphonic Choir	1
CR 517	Master Singers	1
CR 620	Graduate Choral Conducting Seminar	2
CR 627	Choral Literature I	3
MH 731	Intro to Musicology	3
	Semester Credit Hours	**10**
Spring Semester		
CR 509	Symphonic Choir	1
CR 517	Master Singers	1
CR 628	Choral Literature II	3
CR 720	Graduate Conducting Forum	1
CR 620	Graduate Choral Conducting Seminar	2
CR 710	Seminar in Choral Literature	3
	Semester Credit Hours	**11**

Year 2		
Fall Semester		
CR 509	Symphonic Choir	1
CR 517	Master Singers	1
CR 620	Graduate Choral Conducting Seminar	2
Theory or Music History elective		3
Core elective		3
	Semester Credit Hours	**10**
Summer Semester		
CR 509	Symphonic Choir	1
CR 517	Master Singers	1
CR 607	Conducting Performance	1
CR 720	Graduate Conducting Forum	1
Free elective		3
	Semester Credit Hours	**7**
	Total Credit Hours for Graduation	**38**

Courses and Descriptions

CR 505 Advanced Conducting 3 Credits
A continuation of the conducting studies begun in CR 215 and CR 315, this course aims to be more student-centered, following the process from repertoire planning to the final performance. Intensive score preparation, advanced rehearsal techniques, performance practice and baton technique.
Prerequisite(s): CR 315.

CR 509 Symphonic Choir 1 Credits
A large mixed chorus comprised of students above the lower division, including graduate students from all disciplines. The ensemble regularly performs in the region and focuses on the major choral/orchestral repertoire along with a wide variety of repertoire for large mixed chorus. Placement hearing required.
Prerequisite(s): CR 209 with a minimum grade of D.

CR 511 Westminster Choir 1 Credits
A highly select ensemble that performs and records a wide variety of choral repertoire, the Westminster Choir regularly tours nationally and internationally, and aspires to the highest professional standards. Members are selected by audition from all Westminster students above the freshman level. The requirements for selection include good academic standing, strong musicianship, and superior vocal talent. Auditions are held in the fall semester and students participate for the academic year.

CR 513 Williamson Voices 1 Credits
A chamber choir with a unique mission that combines performance and outreach education. Repertoire is chosen from a broad spectrum of literature, including world music and contemporary choral works. Auditions are held in the fall semester and students participate for the academic year.

CR 515 Westminster Kantorei 1 Credits
An early music vocal chamber ensemble specializing in music before 1750, with occasional forays into more contemporary repertoire. [Although the ensemble will generally consist of around 16 singers, the exact make-up of the ensemble will vary from semester to semester, depending on the works to be studied and performed.] Repertoire will include works for vocal ensemble and works featuring significant solo work. The entire ensemble will rehearse three hours per week. Keyboardists may audition for the ensemble. Auditions are held in the fall semester and students participate for the academic year.

CR 517 Master Singers 1 Credits
A mixed ensemble serving as the choir for Graduate Conducting, Sacred Music and Music Education majors. Repertoire consists of a wide variety of choral works drawn from all style periods, works appropriate for use in churches and in schools at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Four semesters are required for all graduate Choral Conducting majors. Two semesters are required for Sacred Music majors, and those Music Education majors who have selected conducting as their performance field. This ensemble is non-auditioned and open to all students.

SM 519 Concert Handbell Choir I 1 Credits
A choir selected by audition from the most experienced and capable bell ringers among the student body at large. This ensemble utilizes advanced repertoire and techniques, aiming primarily at presenting concerts both on and off campus, including a two-week annual tour.

CR 524 Vocal Techniques for Choirs 3 Credits
Study of vocal techniques appropriate for use in choral rehearsals and for teaching class voice. Techniques for effecting change in group vocal productions are discussed, including such topics as the identification of group vocal problems and mental and physical preparation of a group for good vocal production. Techniques to be developed include (1) how to communicate information about vocal technique to amateur singers, (2) exercises used to develop choral sound by improving diction, dynamics, legato, staccato, martellato, high and low registers, resonance, vowel modification, etc., (3) how to train singers to use a vocal production specifically appropriate to the repertoire of various style periods and the demands of individual composers, and (4) conducting methods for good choral and vocal training. Recommended both for conducting majors and for students in other major programs, including those for whom the voice is not the primary performance medium.

CR 607 Conducting Performance 1 Credits
Graduate Conducting, Sacred Music and Music Education students (with a conducting concentration) enroll for Conducting Performance in the semester of their recital or major conducting project.

CR 621 Choral Conducting I 3 Credits
A study of conducting to develop technique through facial expression, breathing, alignment and gesture. Emphasis is placed on developing and refining a process of score study. This course will assist conductors in evaluating their conducting and preparing them to make conducting decisions based upon score study.

CR 622 Choral Conducting II 3 Credits
In addition to building on the conducting skills taught in Conducting I, this course will focus upon acquisition of a broad range of rehearsal methods and techniques and gaining a comprehensive knowledge of choral ensemble warm-up philosophies, methods and techniques. Conductors will continue to study various approaches to score analysis that aid in preparation for rehearsal. Participants in the course will be required to submit a comprehensive case study which focuses on rehearsal technique and rehearsal procedures.
Prerequisite(s): CR 621.

CR 624 Conducting Skills 3 Credits

CR 628 Choral Literature II 3 Credits
A study of selected major choral works, involving analytical and stylistic study. Oral reports by class members on assigned topics.

CR 641B Conducting Primary 1 Credits

CR 641D Conducting Primary (Elective) 1 Credits

CR 641F Conducting Primary 1 Credits

CR 681 Baroque Performance Practice 3 Credits
A practical and theoretical study of issues of Baroque performance practice, including tempo, phrasing and articulation, ornamentation, rhythmic alternation, qualities of sound, continuo practice, influence of dance, affect and national idioms. Primary source materials will serve as the basic core of readings for the course, supplemented and supported by recordings and contemporary resources. In the later half of the semester, students will perform in a series of master classes.
Prerequisite(s): for undergraduates MH 248, TH 241.

CR 690 Independent Research and Study 1-4 Credits
Students may pursue a special topic for which they have prepared through prior course work. Only one project may be scheduled in a semester. The project may involve 1-3 credit hours. Approval of the faculty sponsor, department chair, and dean required prior to the first day of the semester in which the project is to be completed. Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 required.
Prerequisite(s): graduate standing.

CR 710 Seminar in Choral Literature 3 Credits
An intensive study of a specific area of choral history and literature. The content of this course will vary from semester to semester with the special interests and qualifications of the professor teaching it. Emphasis is placed upon in-depth study of the selected repertoire. May be repeated for credit.
Prerequisite(s): undergraduate must have Permission of Instructor.

CR 720 Graduate Conducting Forum 1 Credits
A conducting seminar that focuses on the synthesis of gesture, score study and pedagogy. Select repertoire and research materials will be conducted, analyzed and discussed. Focus will be given to orals preparation and current choral conducting issues. This course may be repeated for credit.

ME 540 Choir Train for Young Singers 3 Credits
This course focuses on children's choirs in school, church and community. Students learn strategies to teach children good vocal technique and to build musical literacy through the study of appropriate repertoire. Course content, activities and experiences in this course covers New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Music and prepares students to meet the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teaching.
Prerequisite(s): Junior status.

ME 591 Choral Music Grades 5-12 3 Credits
This course is designed to acquaint the music educator with repertoire suitable for use with middle and senior high school choral ensembles. Representative repertoire from all periods of music will be discussed, analyzed and performed in class. Course content, activities and experiences in this course covers New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Music and prepares students to meet the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teaching.
Prerequisite(s): Junior status.

MH 731 Intro to Musicology 3 Credits
Introduction to the basic tools of research in historical musicology in order to foster: (1) an awareness of the nature and scope of historical musicology as a scholarly discipline; (2) familiarity with the techniques of musicological research; (3) an understanding of the relationship between musicological research and performance practice; and (4) experience in the application of musicological techniques to specific musical works and issues. It is strongly recommended that this course be taken at the outset of graduate study. Required for all Master of Music candidates.

SM 509 Jubilee Singers 1 Credits
This auditioned ensemble is devoted to the performance of sacred music from the African-American tradition.

SM 621 Oratorio Solo Literature 3 Credits
A performance course surveying solo and ensemble portions of oratorios, masses, passions and cantatas from the early Baroque period to the present, with emphasis on appropriate performance techniques for stylistic integrity. Offered in rotation with other Sacred Music electives.